



NottAlone Website

Aim of the project: Expand the NottAlone website to create an all age, single point of access for mental health information.

Area: Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire

Who was involved: Debs Dulake and Carrie Lambert-Smith

Learning area: Coproduction of resources, the impact of coproduction on the people taking part.

The 'advert' for the Mental Health Coproduction Group



Contents:

- The scope of the work.
- The emotional impact of this approach.

This will take you 10 minutes to read.

Introduction from the Coproduction Team...

In this series of case studies, we explore the positive emotional impact of coproduction for both staff and lived experience experts.

We want to encourage a coproduction approach by showcasing that it can be fun, rewarding and inspiring. Have a look through this case study and explore the top tips that will support you on your coproduction journey.

The full scope of the work:

- The NottAlone website was originally aimed at children and young people.
- The resource has been expanded to adults, to provide an all-age, single point of access for mental health information and support.
- It was co-created over 18 months with lived experience experts, peer support workers and health professionals.

- The NottAlone website is being tested for usability before being launched.

How was the NottAlone website created?

Two coproduction groups were established. One comprised of people with lived experience and Peer Support Workers. The other comprised of partners and professionals.

This ensured lived experience experts had a safe space to be their authentic selves, and talk openly about their experiences of using mental health services.

The two groups:

- Had the same agenda, created based on content need.
- Received the output from the other group to inform their approach.
- Met monthly, two weeks apart, to co-design the website.

Whilst there was flexibility to co-design the website's format and thematic, the branding and some technical aspects were fixed and could not be influenced.

To encourage involvement in the coproduction group we...

- Created a poster detailing what we were inviting people to do, how much time it would take and what experience they needed.
- Attended existing coproduction groups, including My Life Choices, to talk to members about what we wanted to achieve and inviting them to get involved.

“This was a wonderful process. A gold standard example of coproduction”

Debs Dulake, Lived Experience Expert

Enablers of coproduction...

Debs and Carrie shared this advice for making your coproduction a success:

- **Reimbursement** - a golden thread of coproduction. A lack of reimbursement can make lived experience experts feel like they are being taken advantage of. The cost of paying out of pocket expenses is minimal, compared to the cost of redesigning a service that isn't right!
- **Focused scope** - the lived experience members were originally recruited specifically to focus on the website co-design. After a few meetings we broadened the focus to all adult mental health. Whilst we can't confirm this was the cause, attendance decreased to 3 people by the next meeting. We responded by reverting back to a single project focus, with the option for members to continue to co-produce with us on future projects
- **Relationships** - invest time in building trusted relationships. Get to know each other, this builds trust but it also means you can identify if there is a session that someone is going to find upsetting.
- **Communicate** - maintain regular contact with your lived experience experts.

- **Respect** - value the knowledge and experience of the lived experience experts you are working with.
- **Different meeting formats** - don't just have your meetings online. Digital poverty means that a lot of people don't have access to a screen or the confidence to use one, narrowing the voices you hear from.
- **Time:**
 - Don't move the days & times of meetings.
 - If only one person turns up, have the meeting anyway. Make it worth their time!
 - Be clear about when you need involvement or a response - this allows lived experience members to plan their activity around pain levels.
- **Recognise your own limitations** - don't get involved in too many projects at once as they can be time consuming and take a long time.
- **Close the loop** - tell everyone about the impact they made!

“Respect peoples time and commit to a regular, fixed slot for any co-production group. Moving things around can feel as though you value your time more than theirs”.

Carrie Lambert-Smith, Service Transformation Officer

Top Tips....

- Take time to create a safe space and build relationships before expecting lived experience experts to share their stories and experiences. You can do this by spending time each session getting to know each other and doing what you say you will.
- Do what you say you are going to. This shows that you respect and value each others time and commitment to the project.
- Recognise and respect that some lived experience experts are fighting through pain and discomfort to be involved.

Emotional impact of coproduction...

Debs shared how working with Carrie to coproduce the NottAlone website made her feel. Here are some of the things she said:

- Her involvement was driven by passion for the NHS and desire to make things better for others.
- She felt heard, seen and respected, throughout the life of the project, by all the professionals involved.
- Not being reimbursed leads to a feeling of being used - an organisation doesn't think twice about paying a web developer for their contribution to a project.
- Felt grateful for being involved in the project and Carrie's welcoming nature - she set expectations and led by example.
- Has influenced change through her continued involvement in this project and created something that will help people.
- Projects getting disbanded or repeatedly picked up and put down is soul destroying.
- If a service is not fit for purpose, it creates fear for patients - this can be avoided through coproduction.

Thinking points...

- How could you bring a similar approach into your work?
- Who are your stakeholders - lived experience experts and paid staff?
What is the best way to invite them to get involved?

**“Do it with us,
not to us”.**

Debs Dulake, Lived Experience Expert

Next steps...

The all age NottAlone website is being user tested before being launched.

The NottAlone website for children and young people is available online. It provides local mental health advice and help for young people in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, all in one place.

Click below to access it.



NottAlone is here!

The **NEW** website offering local mental health advice and help for young people in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, all in one place.

nottalone.org.uk

Local mental health advice and help for young people in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, all in one place

Local mental health advice and help for young people in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

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